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INFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [ELAB](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/17/06

INDEX:

- (1) US Secretary of State Rice issues strong warning to North Korea:
"If there is another nuclear test, it will be further isolated"
- (2) Growing criticism of Nakagawa's nuclear argument may harm Abe
administration
- (3) Editorial: Thoughtless remark on nuclear weapons by LDP policy
chief Nakagawa
- (4) Interview on North Korea's nuclear test: Former LDP Vice
President Taku Yamasaki calls for realization of US-DPRK talks
instead of sanctions
- (5) North Korea with it nuclear test now laughing at peace-senile
Japan
- (6) Minshuto issues statement welcoming UN resolution on sanctions
against North Korea
- (7) Editorial: Abe administration's solid start merits appreciation
- (8) Former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura to assume
chairmanship of the Mori faction possibly next week
- (9) Okinawa has worst record in country for drunk driving

ARTICLES:

(1) US Secretary of State Rice issues strong warning to North Korea:
"If there is another nuclear test, it will be further isolated"

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Top play) (Full)
Eve., October 17, 2006

By Yasuhisa Oguri in Washington

Prior to her visits to Japan, the Republic of Korea, China, and Russia, US Secretary of State Rice gave a press conference on the 16th. In it, she gave a strong warning to North Korea, now that the view has emerged that it is preparing for a second nuclear test: "We are continuing to watch the situation, and are consulting other countries on this matter. (If it carries out another nuclear test,) North Korea will find itself even more isolated than ever."

Secretary Rice pointed out that the purpose of her overseas travel

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was "to consult on how to build a practical framework for detecting and monitoring dangerous materials in the region." With North Korea's nuclear testing in mind, she indicated her intention to suggest setting up a body to stop the transfer of nuclear materials and sound out each country about such.

On the other hand, she also commented on China's next move following the United Nations Security Council's adoption of a sanctions resolution against North Korea: "I am not worried about China not carrying out its responsibility," indicating her view that China would play out its role.

Secretary Rice also stressed that if North Korea were to bring about

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an unforeseen contingency, "The United States has the will and the capability to fully carry out its security responsibilities toward its allies South Korea and Japan." She urged both countries: "Just

TOKYO 00006042 002 OF 011

are they are commonly blessed with safety, they also have the obligation to share responsibilities."

(2) Growing criticism of Nakagawa's nuclear argument may harm Abe administration

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
October 17, 2006

Liberal Democratic Party Policy Research Council Chairman Shoichi Nakagawa's remarks calling for discussion on possessing nuclear weapons in reaction to North Korea's declared nuclear test have created a sensation. The statement has drawn fire from the government and the ruling coalition, not to mention opposition parties. The statement is also expected to stir criticism from other countries, as well. The Nakagawa remarks might dampen the high popularity of the Abe administration that has just got off to a start.

Possible harmful effect on by-elections

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met last evening with Communist Party of China (CPC) International Department head Wang Jiarui, now visiting Japan to attend an exchange meeting between the CPC and Japan's ruling parties. Asked by Wang about the government's stance toward the three non-nuclear principles, Abe said matter-of-factly, "There is no need to worry about it."

Desperate to minimize the impact of the Nakagawa statement, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuhisa Shiozaki also said: "The government will maintain the three principles. The government's policy will not waver."

New Komeito Representative Akihiro Ota also brushed aside Nakagawa's remarks, saying to reporters yesterday: "There is no need to discuss (the idea of possessing nuclear weapons)." A senior LDP lawmaker who has previously served as defense chief also took this view: "Nuclear

armament can be discussed after Japan leaves the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. The option, however, might end up destroying the country's economy." A senior Upper House member also disregarded the Nakagawa statement, noting, "It is inconceivable for Japan to possess nuclear weapons." Abe and Nakagawa, both conservative, have worked closely in pursuing projects, including a group of junior lawmakers to consider Japan's future and history education. The appointment of Nakagawa as the party's policy chief seems to reflect Abe's strong wishes. The controversial remarks by Nakagawa -- an LDP executive and Abe's longtime ally -- could traumatize the Abe administration.

Meanwhile, Nakagawa indicated to reporters yesterday that he would not retract his controversial remarks, explaining: "I have always advocated opposition to going nuclear. Discussing (the option of going nuclear) does not conflict with observing the three non-nuclear rules."

A government source thinks Nakagawa made the controversial remarks in part to demonstrate Japan's posture of not regarding the nuclear option as a taboo in dealing with North Korea, given that country's declaration of possessing nuclear weapons. People of Japan, the only country to have suffered nuclear attacks, are quick to respond negatively to discussion on possessing nuclear weapons. Some are voicing fear of the Nakagawa statement adversely affecting the Oct. 22 Lower House by-elections.

TOKYO 00006042 003 OF 011

Such countries as the United States and China are keenly alarmed at North Korean's nuclear test throwing East Asia's strategy off balance and prompting Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan to go nuclear one after another.

Behind the controversial statement seems to lie Nakagawa's intention to press China, a strong ally of North Korea, to wield significant influence over Pyongyang. But his remarks may evoke doubts not only in China but also the United States.

Main points in Nakagawa's remarks

7 There could be an argument that possession of nuclear weapons diminishes the likelihood of being attacked as we could fight back in such an event.

7 The country will maintain the three non-nuclear principles, but discussion must be conducted. There is a need to discuss thoroughly whether or not one of the important postwar promises must be reviewed.

7 At present, Japan has the three non-nuclear rules. But discussion must be conducted thoroughly because calls for possessing nuclear weapons would arise naturally in view of the situations in areas surrounding Japan.

(3) Editorial: Thoughtless remark on nuclear weapons by LDP policy chief Nakagawa

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
October 17, 2006

Shoichi Nakagawa, chair of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Policy Research Council, stated on Oct. 15 that: "Debate is needed" regarding the question of whether Japan should possess nuclear armaments. But yesterday, he portrayed himself as "an opponent to Japan having nuclear arms." Nakagawa's controversial remark about Japan considering a nuclear option cropped up at a time when the international community is about to act together against North Korea's nuclear ambitions, so the contents of his statement not only lacked good judgment, it also could cause neighboring countries to harbor suspicions and fear about Japan's intentions.

Specifically, Nakagawa stated on a TV program on Oct. 15 that although this was not his own opinion, "There is an argument calling on Japan to possess nuclear weapons as one option to prevent other countries from committing aggression against our country. This issue

should be debated extensively." Even after the TV program ended, Nakagawa continued to tell reporters: "(Japan) is severely shackled by the three nonnuclear principles. I'm not saying this (nuclear armament) should be done immediately." He went on, "Some take the view that given the circumstances around Japan, it is only natural for Japan to have nuclear weapons."

In connection with North Korea's nuclear test, a segment of the Western press has expressed concern about the possibility of Japan going nuclear. Perhaps aware of that concern, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made it clear, as in his Diet replies, that Japan would firmly uphold the three nonnuclear principles. Despite this, Nakagawa's controversial remark could be taken by other countries, including China and South Korea, as the "armor worn beneath the clothes," and it could raise doubts about Japan among other countries.

TOKYO 00006042 004 OF 011

A number of conservative intellectuals take the view that it is strange to seal off debate about such a question. But a senior ruling party member's remark has much more weight than that of an ordinary citizen. In military context, Japan has generally reached the conclusion that a nuclear option is not a rational idea.

If Japan were to maintain a nuclear deterrent, it would have to have a capability of countering a second attack. Nuclear-tipped missiles to be used against the second strike need to be concealed. But Japan has no sites to do so. One idea may be to install them in a submarine, but facilities now used by the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) are limited, so they are easily detectable.

It is unlikely that any country in the world would welcome Japan's opting for a nuclear solution. In that context, if Japan were to develop its own nuclear arms, it would be invite being isolated from the international community, just as North Korea now experiences. Nakagawa's argument that "some are beginning to insist that no doubt Japan should have it, given the circumstances around Japan" comes from the same logic that North Korea is now using.

There is a view that debating a nuclear option will enhance deterrence, and eventually induce United States to turn its eye more toward Japan. This thinking, too, stems from the same logic North Korea uses: that by behaving like a "bad boy," it is drawing the attention of the US and other countries, thus helping to ensure its own security.

(4) Interview on North Korea's nuclear test: Former LDP Vice President Taku Yamasaki calls for realization of US-DPRK talks instead of sanctions

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)
October 17, 2006

Interviewer: Tetsuya Furuta

-- Do you think the United Nations' latest sanction resolution against North Korea will be effective?

Yamasaki: "Unless North Korea shifts its attitude, (ship) inspections will be carried out mostly by the United States. The inspections would be significant in terms of cutting off sea lanes, even though China and Russia won't conduct them."

-- The government and the ruling coalition are considering implementing own ship inspections?

"I think Japan should do what it can do within the purview of the following three premises: the situation is recognized as a situation in areas surrounding Japan (shuhen jitaI or a contingency) (as stated in the Law on a Situation in the Areas Surrounding Japan); consent is obtained (from a country to which a ship belongs); and warning shots are not allowed. Perhaps US forces expect Japan to offer logistic support, such as refueling and water supplying. A number of arguments suggest Japan should be the first to be mobilized and do something, but that is wrong. Japan can't do so nor should it do so."

-- Do you think it is possible under the UN resolution this time to see the current situation as a contingency in areas surrounding Japan as described in the law?

TOKYO 00006042 005 OF 011

"By somehow stretching the law, it is possible to recognize it as a situation in areas surrounding Japan, but I wonder whether it is necessary for Japan to do such a thing in order to conduct own ship inspections. I think Japan should do what it can in response to America's request. The first thing to do is to hold consultations with the US in a cool-headed manner."

-- The Abe administration is proceeding in the belief that the current situation can be recognized as a situation in areas surrounding Japan.

"If the current situation is recognized as a situation in areas surrounding Japan, that means Japan recognizes the existence of a contingency on the Korean Peninsula. But I don't think it is a good policy to stretch the law to recognize a contingency. The US does not regard it as a contingency in the Far East, either. Why is Japan moving in that direction? In terms of the prime minister's conventional assertion that 'abduction is more important than nuclear programs among the North Korean issues,' the current move is most undesirable. In the event of an emergency, (abductees) cannot return home safely."

-- Do you think the government and the ruling parties are being too hasty?

"Yes, indeed. If they remain as they are, they cannot achieve the two goals of denuclearizing the peninsula and resolving the abduction issue."

-- What do you think is a way to make the peninsula a nuclear free zone?

"First, Japan should work on the US to hold bilateral talks with the DPRK. But Japan has done nothing since former Prime Minister Koizumi visited (the US) in June. (The government of Japan) should ask (the US) to hold talks with North Korea, but it is urging it instead to step up sanctions. Such being the case, (a military solution) could arise; a war would be unavoidable."

-- Some in the ruling parties assert that it is all right to discuss a nuclear option for Japan.

"That is out of the question. It's OK if commentators or critics debate the issue, but it is bad for those who are responsible for political affairs to discuss it. Because they would mislead the public."

(5) North Korea with its nuclear test now laughing at peace-senile Japan

SANKEI (Page 17) (Full)
October 13, 2006

Tadae Takubo, visiting professor at Kyorin University

I wonder if this kind of opinion comes from a perception gap. This country's press editorials-with a few exceptions-are really lukewarm (over North Korea's recent nuclear test). This time around, some anti-US segments of the media are suddenly beginning to insist on using the Japan-US alliance as a deterrent. That's ridiculous. Even more annoying, one anti-US newspaper emphasized in its editorial that Japan would have to soften the tensions in a careful manner so

TOKYO 00006042 006 OF 011

that North Korea will not come out with any reckless act on the strength of its nuclear weapons. That's really embarrassing.

North Korea, which hates Japan, has now joined the club as the eighth nuclear power. This is a cold fact about the way realpolitik actually is in the international arena. North Korea will soon target its arsenal of nuclear-warhead-tipped missiles at Japan. This has further spurred the nuclear nonproliferation regime's collapse. The six-party talks, which were supposed to have blocked North Korea from going nuclear, were only used as a tool for North Korea to attain its goal to carry out nuclear testing. Even if North Korea returns to the six-party talks, the other five countries would face further difficulties in their efforts on the diplomatic front to urge North Korea to give up its nuclear ambitions. I suppose South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun almost admits that fact now. Seoul's "sunshine policy," which seemed to contain something meaningful, was no more than a chimera. In my view, the balance of power in East Asia has drastically changed.

Meanwhile, there was a curious happening in Okinawa at the same time that North Korea carried out its nuclear test. A freighter carrying Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) ground-to-air intercept missiles, which were soon to be deployed to the US Kadena Air Base in Okinawa Prefecture as a missile defense (MD) system, was held up for a while in the middle of Kin Bay. The local media played up this fact. They don't seem to care about what crisis all of Japan including Okinawa was facing. However, I wonder if we can just laugh it off. I think this kind of problem epitomizes Japan.

Unashamedly enough, Japan, in its postwar constitution, declared "the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world." The government, in its interpretation thereof, has taken the position that Japan is vested with the right to collective self-defense but is not allowed to exercise it. Furthermore, Japan has taken a defense-only posture and avowed its "three nonnuclear" principles (of not possessing, producing or allowing nuclear weapons into Japan). These policies are the backbones of Japan in its postwar era. Need I say that they have now all collapsed before North Korea's nuclear test? Prime Minister Shinzo Abe recently visited Beijing, where he made a statement to the following effect in line with Prime Minister Murayama's August 1995 statement: "Japan in the 60 postwar years stands on its deep self-reflection on the fact that it once inflicted severe damage and left scars on the peoples of countries in Asia." This statement, however, sounds empty before Pyongyang's loud laugh.

What can Japan do? Japan should work together with the United States to have the United Nations Security Council adopt a resolution in line with Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter and take effective sanction measures at the earliest possible date. At the same time, Japan should implement all possible sanctions that might be still left.

Whether China will agree to impose sanctions on North Korea or impose conditions will have a meaning. China itself is probably well aware that this will be a touchstone for whether it can become a responsible stakeholder and a player in maintaining international order.

I hope that international sanctions will make North Korea decide to give up its nuclear ambitions. If we cannot hope for it, then I presume that the dynasty of Kim Jong Il would be overthrown from within itself.

TOKYO 00006042 007 OF 011

The Kim dynasty reminds me of Romania's Ceausescu, who was supposed to have completely placed his military under his control but encountered its unexpected defection in a riot raised by a small number of Hungarian residents in 1989. He met with a tragic end. However, I must admit that a view of this kind contains wishful thinking.

Some people are saying Japan would go nuclear and cause a chain reaction to Taiwan. This, they say, would bring about a "nuclear domino phenomenon." Forty years ago, Saburo Hayashi, a Mainichi Shimbun correspondent to Paris, interviewed Gen. Pierre Galois, who was an aide to President DeGaulle.

In the interview, Gen. Galois said France went nuclear in the cause of coping with the military threat of the Soviet Union. At the same time, however, the general came up with a weird forecast, saying countries in the Far East, stipulated by China's acquisition of nuclear weapons, would also face up to a similar problem in the future. In those days, my eyes were riveted on the Soviet threat, so I didn't believe his outlook. But now that we are facing North Korea's nuclear weapons, I cannot suppress a grunt of admiration.

However, the circumstances of France in those days are quite different from the position of Japan today. Should the greater part of Japan incline to go nuclear, everybody could imagine how difficult it is for the world's second biggest economic power to join the nuclear club.

The moment DeGaulle had nuclear weapons in his hands, he bragged that he was set free from bonds with America. Japan, as an ally of the United States, is under the nuclear umbrella of Uncle Sam. Japan's choosing to follow in the footsteps of DeGaulle will touch the alliance's subtle point. In point of fact, it would be impossible for Japan to go nuclear at present.

However, would it be all right to deprive Japan of all possible options at our own discretion in our age? Japan must be prepared at least to defend itself on its own if and when it is at a moment of truth, or Japan cannot be powerful enough in its action.

(6) Minshuto issues statement welcoming UN resolution on sanctions against North Korea

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
October 16, 2006

Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) Policy Research Council Chairman Takeaki Matsumoto yesterday issued a statement welcoming the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution calling for sanctions against North Korea. It noted, "We highly evaluate that the UN is eager to perform its initial function." Asked in an Asahi TV program the same day about the party's view about ship inspections as stipulated in the resolution, Matsumoto only replied, "Japan has to do what it can do."

In her party's statement, Social Democratic Party head Mizuho Fukushima praised the resolution, but regarding ship inspections, she said, "Since such act might lead to battle action, we must be cautious about implementing the measure." Speaking before reporters in Tokyo yesterday, Policy Council Chairman Tomoko Abe indicated a negative view about recognizing a "regional contingency." The recognition is a precondition for the Maritime Self-Defense Force to

TOKYO 00006042 008 OF 011

be allowed to join ship inspections. Abe said, "If the current state is recognized as a regional contingency, an expanded interpretation may be frequently applied in the future."

In an Asahi TV program the same day, Japanese Communist Party Policy Committee Chairman Akira Koike said: "The state of a wartime fire raging on the opposite shore is being defined as a regional contingency. The current state cannot be recognized as a contingency."

(7) Editorial: Abe administration's solid start merits appreciation

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)
October 14, 2006

Meetings at the budget committees of both chambers ended yesterday. In the meetings, Abe engaged in full-fledged Diet debate as the prime minister for the first time. Immediately after assuming office, Abe has resumed summit meetings with Chinese and South Korean leaders. He also faced an unexpected development in the form of North Korea's nuclear test. He seems to have so far steadily managed his government, and we would like to give him credit.

What is noteworthy is that Abe changed his perception of Japan's wartime history before his meetings with the Chinese and South

Korean leaders.

Before assuming the premiership, Abe took a negative view about the statement in 1995 in which Prime Minister Murayama expressed an apology for Japan's colonial rule and aggression, as well as the statement issued by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono in 1993 admitting the Imperial Japanese Army's involvement in the comfort-women issue. In Diet deliberations, Abe revealed that his government would honor the two statements. The prime minister, by making such statements, succeeded in putting an end to the thorny issue of historical views, which some observers had viewed as a bottleneck for his administration. The environment was thus set for meetings with the Chinese and South Korean leaders.

There must have been on hand intelligence that North Korea would soon conduct a nuclear test. Based on such analysis, Abe took a strategic stance, judging that getting out of step with these two countries would be playing right into North Korea's hands.

The prime minister also said that Japan has no nuclear ambitions and will uphold the three non-nuclear principles. Keeping in mind the emergence in the United States of the speculation that Japan might consider the nuclear option in the wake of North Korea's nuclear test, Abe made a quick response measure.

The prime minister also gave this Diet reply: "Some might complain that my remarks (on historical views and the nation's nuclear option) are contradictory to what I said before. I meekly accept the criticism." Those expecting Abe to demonstrate his own policy imprint have already express dissatisfaction with his policy switch. On Oct. 13, ahead of the United Nations Security Council's adoption of a resolution calling for sanctions against North Korea, Japan in a cabinet meeting adopted its own sanctions against North Korea. Some observers analyze that this move represents the prime minister's willingness to demonstrate that he is a "fighting prime minister."

Some expect that Abe might begin to express his own stock views after riding through the House of Councillors election next summer.

TOKYO 00006042 009 OF 011

But in various opinion polls, the prime minister's stance toward China and South Korea has won high support rates. As long as he continues to listen to the public's views, Abe is unlikely to change his current stance in principle.

Turning to domestic affairs, the Education Revitalization Council, set up under the instruction of Prime Minister Abe, includes a variety of members including conservatives, moderates, and liberals. Some anticipated that only those who have views close to the prime minister's might be selected. But he gave consideration to a well-balanced lineup.

Before the Abe administration was launched, the Mainichi Shimbun encouraged the prime minister not to be overly eager and to be flexible, although some other papers highlighted the danger of a "hawkish prime minister." To counter the opposition camp, including Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), it is natural for the prime minister to opt for widening the wing without exclusively devoting himself to the rightwing. The opposition side might have the feeling that the prime minister gave it the dodge. It is now urged to revamp its strategy.

The prime minister will inevitably continue to face a crucial moment for a while. Tensions over the North Korea issue are expected to run higher following the adoption by the United Nations of a resolution against that nation. We hope Prime Minister Abe will continue to be steady and flexible as he did when his government got off to a start.

(8) Former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura to assume chairmanship of the Mori faction possibly next week

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
October 17, 2006

Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori, who chairs the Mori faction in

the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), firmed up his intention on Oct. 16 to resign his post in the near future. Accompanying that decision, coordination is going forward in the faction to name as the next chairman former Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura, who is now secretary general of the faction. The formal decision to appoint him may come as early as next week,

Mori, who served as chairman for five years under the Koizumi administration, hinted at the possibility of his retiring when he said at a meeting of the faction Sept. 21, following the selection of Shinzo Abe (of the same faction) as LDP president: "My role in the faction is generally over." He was asked by Yasuo Fukuda and other senior faction leaders to stay on but did not respond.

Mori yesterday told his aides: "From the start, I always thought that I would resign as chairman once the LDP presidential election was over. My feeling remains the same as before. No matter how you press me to stay, I won't change my mind." He stressed that he would not change his view about resigning the post. The successor, Machimura, has let it be known to several faction officials that he desired the post. Coordination will now begin to appoint him to the chairman's position. The idea has been floating of making Mori the honorary chairman of the faction.

(9) Okinawa has worst record in country for drunk driving

YOMIURI (Page 13) (Full)

TOKYO 00006042 010 OF 011

October 7, 2006

Does drunk driving vary based on the locality? The Yomiuri Shimbun calculated the number of crackdowns on drunk driving per 100,000 licensed drivers based on the National Police Agency's released data about the number of drunk driving cases and the population of licensed drivers throughout the country.

Looking at last year's worst offenders, Okinawa Prefecture by far overwhelmed all other prefectures with 1,123 cases (per 100,000 licensed drivers), followed by Yamanashi Prefecture and Mie Prefecture. Furthermore, both Kochi Prefecture and Akita Prefecture—where people were found to be spending much more money on alcoholic drinks than other prefectures, according to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications' survey of household expenses—ranked high on the prefectural list of offenders. Meanwhile, Gifu Prefecture was the lowest of all prefectures with 107 cases. Nara Prefecture and Fukui Prefecture were also less than 10% of the record set by Okinawa Prefecture.

In 2001, the criminal code was revised with the establishment of charges against dangerous driving resulting in death or injury. After that, the total number of nationwide cases of arrests for drunk driving decreased from 175,730 in 2003 to 140,873 last year. During that time, however, the annual number of arrests in crackdowns on drunk driving increased from 8,074 to 9,285 in Okinawa Prefecture, likewise up from 1,692 to 2,275 in Yamanashi Prefecture and up from 3,160 to 3,243 in Mie Prefecture. The figures show that the introduction of severe penalties has had no effect in these prefectures.

In the Okinawa prefectural police's survey of about 2,500 persons charged with drunken driving, three out of every four persons "didn't think of drinking at first." However, one out of every four persons answered that they had "thought about drinking from the beginning." There were also about 400 violators who had driven home drunk, even though they only lived within a radius of one kilometer from where they drank. "Okinawa's sunset is late when compared with the mainland, and people have many chances to drink away from their homes," says an official of the traffic planning division at the Okinawa Prefectural Police Headquarters. "That's probably why they have a weak feeling of guilt about drinking and driving," the official added.

The Tokyo-based Institute for Traffic Accident Research and Data Analysis (ITARDA) attributes drunk driving in part to the degree of development of public transportation, such as railways and buses.

The worst five includes Wakayama Prefecture and Oita Prefecture -- prefectures that neighbor big cities -- Yamanashi Prefecture and Mie Prefecture. On the contrary, Tokyo and certain other prefectures like Kanagawa Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture, and Kyoto Prefecture, which are highly urbanized areas with various public transportation networks, ranked low on the list.

Such regional disparities, however, should take into account such likely factors as local climates and age structures, in addition to transportation networks and geographic conditions.

Police arrests for drunk driving in 2005 ASTERISK

High Low

1. Okinawa	1,123	1. Gifu	107
2. Yamanashi	388	2. Nara	109
3. Mie	265	3. Fukui	110

TOKYO 00006042 011 OF 011

4. Wakayama	260	4. Tokyo	111
5. Oita	256	5. Tokushima	117
6. Kochi	255	6. Shiga	124
7. Tottori	238	7. Kanagawa	134
8. Hyogo	232	7. Kagawa	134
9. Akita	224	7. Saitama	134
10. Aomori	211	10. Kyoto	139

Cases per 100,000 licensed drivers, based on data provided by NPA.

SCHIEFFER